

CLAIMS

HL
3/17/03 (Amended)

1. In a video on demand system for supplying video data to a subscriber receiver via a program

5 delivery network, the improvement comprising:

a. A data base storage system containing a video on demand program;

b. A transaction server responsively coupled to said data base storage system and said subscriber receiver whereby said subscriber receiver requests a video on demand program from said transaction server and said transaction server spools said video on demand program from

10 said data base storage; and

c. A plurality of video servers responsively coupled to said transaction server and said subscriber receiver via said program delivery network wherein a one of said plurality of video servers is assigned by said transaction server to stream said spooled video on demand program to said subscriber receiver via said program delivery network.

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2. The video on demand system of claim 1 wherein said transaction server further comprises a transaction gateway operating in a middleware environment and a video server frame and stream spooling program responsively coupled to said transaction gateway via said middleware environment.

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3. The video on demand system of claim 2 further comprising a mainframe computer platform hosting said transaction server responsively coupled to said one of said plurality of video servers

and said subscriber receiver.

4. The video on demand system of claim 3 wherein said mainframe computer platform further comprises a Unisys mainframe computer system.

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5. The video on demand system of claim 4 wherein said transaction server spools said video on demand program in the MPEG-2 format.

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6. An apparatus comprising:

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a. A subscribing receiver capable of providing a service request;

b. A data base storage system which stores a video program;

c. A transaction server responsively coupled to said subscribing receiver and said data base storage system capable of receiving said service request, accessing said video program corresponding to said service request from said data base storage system, and spooling said

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video program in response thereto; and

d. A plurality of video servers responsively coupled to said transaction server and said subscribing receiver wherein said transaction server assigns one of said plurality of video servers to stream said spooled video program to said subscribing receiver.

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7. An apparatus according to claim 6 wherein said transaction server further comprises a subscriber account whereby said subscribing receiver is charged for said service request.

8. An apparatus according to claim 7 wherein said transaction server further comprises a transaction gateway operating in a commercial middleware environment.

9. An apparatus according to claim 7 wherein said spooled video program further comprises
5 MPEG-2.

10. An apparatus according to claim 9 wherein said transaction server further comprises a Unisys computer system.

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10 11. A video on demand system comprising:

- a. Means for storing a plurality of video programs;
- b. Means for generating a requested video on demand signal;
- c. Means responsively coupled to said generating means and said storing means for identifying one of said plurality of video programs stored within said storing means
15 corresponding to said requested video on demand signal;
- d. Means responsively coupled to said identifying means and said storing means for spooling said corresponding one of said video programs if said identifying means identifies ; and
- e. A plurality of means responsively coupled to said spooling means and said receiving means for streaming said spooled requested video on demand signal to said receiving means
20 wherein said spooling means assigns one or said plurality of streaming means to stream said spooled video program to said generating means.

12. A video on demand system according to claim 11 wherein said receiving means further comprises a subscriber box.

13. A video on demand system according to claim 12 wherein said receiving means further
5 comprises a transaction gateway.

14. A video on demand system according to claim 13 wherein said receiving means further comprises means for processing subscriber transactions.

10 15. A video on demand system according to claim 14 wherein said receiving means further comprises a Unisys mainframe computer system.

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16. A method of providing video on demand services comprising:

a. Storing a plurality of video programs;

15 b. Receiving a video on demand request from a subscriber at a transaction server;

c. Determining a one of said plurality of video programs corresponding to said video on demand request;

d. Spooling said one of said plurality of video programs corresponding to said video on demand request;

20 e. Assigning one of a plurality of video servers responsively coupled to subscriber to stream said one of said plurality of video programs corresponding to said video on demand request to said subscriber;

f. Transferring said spooled video program from said transaction server to said assigned video server; and

g. Streaming said spooled video program from said assigned video server to said subscriber.

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17. A method according to claim 16 further comprising:

a. Pausing said streaming in response to a pause signal from said subscriber.

18. A method according to claim 16 further comprising:

10 a. Reversing said streaming in response to a reverse signal from said subscriber.

19. A method according to claim 16 further comprising:

a. Fast forwarding said streaming in response to a fast forward from said subscriber.

15 20. A method according to claim 16 wherein said processing step further comprises:

a. Performing subscriber accounting to enable billing said subscriber for said video on demand request.